1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

Small coastal canoes.

The hull is in all cases made of a single hollowed log, the dug-out. In the smallest coastal canoes there are no thwarts, the chief paddler sitting on the flattened stern and the rest on the three outrigger booms (*ne-wu*) where these cross the body of the dug-out.[1] There is a rail lashed along each gunwale, and it is to these two rails that the outrigger booms are themselves lashed. The booms are attached to the outrigger float (*na-sam*) by means of sticks driven diagonally into holes in the float in such a way that the sticks cross one another, and it is to these sticks that the booms are made fast by means of further lashings. All lashing is done with lengths of plaited coconut sinnet (*na-wun*). Made fast to the bow of every canoe is a prow-head carved to represent the highly stylised wings and beak of a bird. These prow-head figures are called *na-ho*, and their main peculiarity is that the cleft representing the space between the mandibles is continued down the gullet. Peculiarities in the carving of these figure-heads indicative of the wealth and importance of their owners are jealously guarded, and may only be copied on payment of a high fee in pigs.[2]

A good-sized specimen of such a canoe capable of carrying eight men and illustrated in Plate XIX was found by Speiser to be 9 metres long and ½ metre broad. The float was 5 metres long and 5 metres distant from the hull.[3]

Large coastal canoes.

The larger coastal canoes (such as that illustrated in Fig. 54) have their sides heightened by means of planks, or wash-strakes (*ne-rev*),[4] lashed on to each side of the hull through holes (*mete-mbò*) bored along the side of each plank, the holes then being plugged with coconut sheathing and the seam yet further protected by means of split bamboos, served with soft string, round which the lashing is made fast. The rear end of the planking is made flush with the stern, but in front a special bow-piece (*soron*) is added, in the form of a short piece of hollowed log, the after-end of which is cut flush with the foremost plank. In such a case, it is to this bow-piece that the bird figure-head is attached. Thwarts (*gheatat*) may be added at will, and along the whole forepart of the canoe

[1] I know of no seat consisting of "small boards almost on the bottom of the hull" such as is referred to by Speiser, 3, p. 251, quoted by Haddon, 3, vol. II, p. 26.

[2] Two examples are illustrated by Speiser, 3, Plate 64, Figs. 1 and 2. For actual specimens from the neighbouring island of Atchin see Layard, 1, Nos. 136 c and 137. Mr. Tom Harrisson tells me that these figure-heads represent either the frigate-bird or the shearwater (see Appendix II).

[3] For further measurements see Speiser, 3, pp. 250-1.

[4] Compare Mota *irav*, "board, slab of wood, in canoe, and house" (Codrington, 2).

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
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free concave upper border, the other two sides being each lashed to a bamboo spar. There being no mast, the sail was held in place by means of a forked piece of wood inserted into the lower end of each spar in such a way that the fork attached to one spar rested on a specially constructed thwart amidships,[1] while that attached to the second spar rested on the stem of the first. Joined thus together at their base, the two spars projected upwards and outwards to support the free upper side of the sail, each upper angle so formed being referred to as the "tip of the wing."

Rigging.

The rigging consisted of six ropes plaited from the inner bark of a tree which in Atchin is called *wulu*, such ropes being more pliable and less liable to fray than the stronger coconut sinnet used for lashing the parts of the canoe. Of these six ropes, three were made fast about half-way up each spar. Functionally, these ropes may be divided into two classes. Two serve as stays, that attached to the windward spar being made fast to the outer longitudinal pole connecting the booms at the point of their attachment to the float, while that supporting the lee spar is made fast to notches on the ends of the booms projecting from beneath the lee platform. The remaining two ropes attached to each spar, making four in all, are made fast respectively to the fore and after thwarts.

Sailing.

The normal sailing direction of the canoe is with the outrigger on the starboard side, and in certain cases when there is only one figure-head, as in the coastal canoes, it is always placed on this side. Normally it is always necessary to keep the outrigger to windward, as otherwise the outrigger would become submerged and sailing would be impossible. In the case of a sea-going canoe, however, which has a prow at both ends, when sailing into the wind, instead of putting about, as is the case with any European craft, the direction of the canoe is reversed at the end of each tack, the sheets being loosened and the sail turned to the required position. This brings the outrigger on to the port side, and for the reason above mentioned, this tack being dangerous, it is never kept up for long, the canoe being brought back as soon as possible on to the starboard tack. For the same reason, this manœuvre is performed only in comparatively calm weather. In rough weather the outrigger is always kept to windward, part of the crew sitting or standing on the weather (outrigger side) platform or even further out along the booms in order to prevent it from being dragged out of the water owing to the pressure of the wind on the sail. In very high winds the sail can be reefed by rolling part of the sail on to the lee spar and making it fast there by loops let into the sail. The

[1] Haddon (ibid. p. 26), describing a specimen in the Basel Museum, says "on the edge of the canoe."